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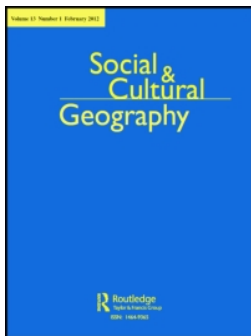
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Encounters and (in)tolerance: perceptions of legality and the regulation of space

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ABSTRACT

Modern western societies are becoming increasingly diverse, undergoing rapid demographic change as a product of new patterns of migration driven by processes of globalization. As populations and cultures have become more heterogeneous in this way, public space has been increasingly defined as a space of encounter. The growing focus on the significance of everyday contact with difference raises questions about the frameworks within which such encounters occur and, specifically, the extent to which incidental encounters are shaped or regulated by perceptions of formal obligations to comply with legislative frameworks, or informal expectations about appropriate ways of behaving in public space. Using original empirical data about what ordinary people think about equality laws, the paper contributes to social geographies by considering the spatial sensitivities and regulatory frameworks that shape encounters with difference.

Rencontres et (in)tolérance: perceptions de légalité et de réglementation de l'espace

RÉSUMÉ

Les sociétés modernes occidentales deviennent de plus en plus diverses, et subissent un changement démographique rapide provenant de nouvelles formes de migration déterminées par les processus de mondialisation. Alors que les populations et les cultures sont ainsi devenues plus hétérogènes, l'espace public est devenu de plus en plus caractérisé comme un espace de rencontre. L'intérêt grandissant pour l'importance du contact quotidien avec la différence soulève des questions sur les cadres à l'intérieur desquels de telles rencontres se passent et pose la question de savoir dans quelle mesure les rencontres fortuites sont formées et régulées par des perceptions d'obligations formelles d'obéir aux cadres législatifs, ou aux attentes informelles quant aux manières appropriées de se comporter dans un espace public. En utilisant des données empiriques sur ce que les gens ordinaires pensent sur les lois d'égalité, l'article contribue aux géographies sociales en considérant les sensibilités spatiales et les cadres régulateurs qui donnent forme aux rencontres avec la différence.

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Encuentros e (in)tolerancia: la percepción de la legalidad y la regulación del espacio

RESUMEN

Las sociedades occidentales modernas se están volviendo cada vez más diversas, experimentando un cambio demográfico rápido como producto de los nuevos patrones de la migración impulsados por los procesos de globalización. Como las poblaciones y culturas se han vuelto más heterogéneas de esta manera, el espacio público se ha definido cada vez más como un espacio de encuentro. El creciente énfasis en la importancia del contacto cotidiano con lo diferente plantea cuestiones acerca de los marcos dentro de los cuales se producen este tipo de encuentros y, específicamente, el grado en que los encuentros fortuitos son formados o regulados por las percepciones de las obligaciones formales a cumplir dentro de marcos legislativos, o expectativas informales sobre formas correctas de comportamiento en el espacio público. Utilizando datos empíricos originales acerca de lo que la gente común piensa sobre las leyes de igualdad, el documento contribuye a las geografías sociales considerando las sensibilidades espaciales y marcos regulatorios que forman encuentros con lo diferente.

Encounters

Modern western societies are becoming increasingly diverse, undergoing rapid demographic change as a product of new patterns of migration driven by processes of globalization. At the same time, the historical shift from industrial society to new modernity in which individuals are assumed to be released from traditional constraints and to have more freedom to create their own individualized biographies has resulted in the more open public expression of a diverse range of social identities and ways of living (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002).

As many Western populations and cultures have become more heterogeneous in this way, discourses of diversity and equality have become increasingly important. Struggles over the 'rights' of different social groups have led to the gradual development of progressive legislative frameworks in North America and the European Union that have changed understandings of what it means to be a citizen in modern western societies (Chouinard, 1994, 2000) (although it is worth noting that the context of diversity in Eastern Europe is very different from Western Europe, given that the Socialist era severely circumscribed population mobility for almost 50 years – see Mayblin, Valentine, & Andersson, 2015; Valentine, Piekut, Winiarska, Harris & Jackson, 2015). Notably, in European countries, with a colonial history such as the UK, an internal globalization of society has taken place in the post-war period as a consequence of complex pattern of immigration following the collapse of empires. In the UK, the arrival of Black-Caribbean and Asian migrants led to the development in the late twentieth century of a loose policy of multiculturalism which – notwithstanding a backdrop of anti-immigration rhetoric and well-documented racism – gave migrants relative freedoms to define their own identities and to create their own communities (Modood, 2007). At the turn of the twenty-first century, new migration patterns have emerged as a consequence of post-conflict migration from Africa, the Middle East and the Balkans, as well as post-accession migration from the European Union (so called 'white other' populations) (Bloch, Neal, & Solomos, 2013). As such, the geographies of ethnicities in Britain have changed. Places and

communities made up of multiple ethnicities have led to emergence of hybrid cultures and identifications. There has been a growth in people with dual heritage/mixed ethnicity and the multicultural population has become dispersed across the country with new migrant populations becoming established in smaller towns and rural areas (Neal, Bennett, Cochrane, & Mohan, 2013). As such, the term 'multiculture' has come to encapsulate the heterogeneity of contemporary urban populations (Gilroy, 2004).

Yet, this period has also witnessed growing anxieties in Britain about the ability of diverse populations to live together in harmony. Race disturbances in three northern English cities (Oldham, Burnley and Bradford) in 2001 led to concerns about patterns of ethnic segregation (Amin, 2002; Phillips, 2006); and global events following the Gulf war, including 9/11 and terror attacks in a major cities around the world, have raised disquiet about the diasporic belongings of migrant communities as securitization has become a priority. As a consequence, the effectiveness of multiculturalism has been called into question resulting in a shift in emphasis in both discourse and policy away from a recognition of difference towards the importance of cohesion and integration (which are necessarily predicated on fostering encounters across diversity and the development of shared identities) (e.g. Bloch et al., 2013; Dwyer & Bressey, 2008; Meer & Modood, 2009).

The issue of diversity is not just one that pertains to race/ethnicity (Piekut et al., 2012; Valentine, 2015). Britain is also one of the societies at the vanguard of processes of detraditionalization and individualization, and consequently it is characterized by the public expression of diverse identities and lifestyle. In particular, there has been a decline in the influence of the Christian Church (though concomitantly the growth of 'new' faith communities associated with migrants), significant changes in gender roles, and the visible emergence of more diverse lifestyles and ways of being evident in the growing public confidence/presence of lesbian, gay and bisexual communities. Such recognition of the multidimensional nature of 'difference' has led to an enriched understanding of what we mean by diversity (Piekut, Rees, Valentine, & Kupiszewski, 2012; Valentine, 2015; Valentine & Sadgrove, 2012).

With the gradual or implicit 'normalisation' of diversity, public space has become increasingly defined as a space of encounter, where as a consequence of living among others, we must all habitually negotiate 'difference' as part of our everyday social routines (Valentine, 2008; Wessendorf, 2013; Wise, 2009). This has led to claims that convivial encounters – as a product of incidental proximity in spaces like markets, cafes, schools and public transport – might generate progressive social relations across difference (e.g. Kesten, Cochrane, Mohan, & Neal, 2011; Laurier & Philo, 2006; Wilson, 2012). Such work has primarily drawn on observational research of the habitual non-conscious performances and micro-socialities of everyday negotiations of difference in the city, prompting criticism that there has been a neglect of how individuals approach and experience encounters and of their ability to make choices around the control of their feelings, relationships and identifications (Valentine & Sadgrove, 2012). Moreover, most writing about encounters primarily considers relations between white majority and minority ethnic groups, and focuses on static or fixed conceptualizations of identity, rather than addressing the full implications of intersectionality. As a consequence, recent research has examined how social identifications unfold across biographical time to highlight the spatio-temporal complexity of experiences of differentiation and some of the complex intersections between different forms of prejudice (Valentine, 2015; Valentine & Sadgrove, 2012, 2014; Valentine et al., 2014). Such work has shown that understanding how encounters can be approached through complex intersectional identities rather than

'group' positions explains how individuals with divergent values and beliefs can in practice live together, despite competing group rights claims in the public sphere (Valentine & Waite, 2012).

Others have questioned the assumption that fleeting contact with 'others' necessarily translates into respect for difference, given the persistence of prejudice, and structural inequalities which generate marginalization and exclusions (Clayton, 2009; Leitner, 2012; Mayblin et al., 2015; Valentine, 2008, 2010). Moreover, enduring patterns of neighbourhood segregation can restrict sustained engagement between communities (Phillips et al., 2014) and even intimate contact with difference within extended families does not necessarily alter attitudes towards 'others' in public space (Valentine, Piekut, & Harris, 2015). Rather, it is argued there is a danger of mistaking social expectations of urban civility for 'meaningful contact': that is encounters which challenge prejudices and translate beyond the moment to produce a more general respect for others (Valentine, 2008).

Drawing on a tradition of work in social psychology which stresses the importance of longer term deeper contact in reducing prejudice (Allport, 1954), some geographers have focused on spaces where more-than-fleeting encounters occur as well as ways that meaningful encounters might be artificially generated through spatial design and social engineering (Fincher & Iveson, 2008; Mayblin et al., 2015). Amin (2002, p. 959) claims, meaningful contact is best achieved in *micro publics*. These are sites of purposeful organized group activity, where people from different backgrounds are brought together such as in sports clubs, drama groups and youth schemes (see also: Askins & Pain, 2011; Mayblin et al., 2015). Other studies have focused on the role of institutions (including: educational spaces, workplaces and churches) in providing organized frameworks for encounters and facilitating friendships across difference to emerge (e.g. Andersson et al., 2012; Hemming, 2011; Neal & Vincent, 2013).

This growing debate about the significance of everyday encounters raises questions about the framework within which they occur, and specifically, the extent to which incidental encounters are shaped or regulated by perceptions of formal obligations to comply with legislative frameworks, or informal expectations about appropriate ways of behaving in public space – what Goffman (1971) has dubbed the grammar of public places.

Legality and the regulation of space

Legal geographies, a subdisciplinary field exploring the way the law and socio-spatial relations are mutually constituted, has gained a rapid momentum in the discipline over the last decade (e.g. Blomley, 1994, 2004; Blomley et al., 2001). Within this literature, there has been a focus on the power of the law to create and define space and spatial meanings (e.g. Blomley, 2004; Braverman et al., 2013; Ford, 2001).

Delaney (1994, 1998) and Ford (2001), for example, have exposed the role of jurisdiction in producing racial segregation and the racialization of difference; and how historical understandings produced through colonialist or racist socio-spatial projects can be given continued effect through the law, even though the ideologies that informed them are no longer acceptable today. In a similar vein, the regulation of vagrancy has been historically linked to class anxieties about the need to control and discipline the poor (Blomley, 2007). More broadly, Blomley's (2011) innovative work on urban governance through a study of the sidewalk has shown how this space is not just produced through engineering rubrics but regulation and case law. Other research has focused on how the enactment of the law

can produce particular spatial norms about who is in place or out of place (literally and metaphorically) (Blandy & Sibley, 2010). In recognizing the ways in which the law is rooted within specific lived social relations that empower some groups while marginalizing others, legal geographies have also sought to critique the workings of power and to show how the relatively disadvantaged too might also deploy aspects of the law in the pursuit of social justice (e.g. Chouinard, 1994, 2000).

What this body of work reveals is that legal phenomena are complexly entangled in the production of 'spatialized fields of power' (Delaney, 2010, p. 168). The rules set out in legal documents are the outcome of social and political contests and as a consequence are largely (though not exclusively) shaped by powerful actors who have access to legal institutions against those who do not (i.e. white people have used the law to achieve racial subordination, and capital has used the law against the interests of labour). In this way, particular ideologies (e.g. racism or classism) can be re-legitimated through the law (Delaney, 2010) and inscribed onto lived environments. The law in turn acts ideationally, shaping beliefs and thoughts (Blomley, 2011, 2013) and so contributes to sustaining hegemonic culture because the dominant group's values become understood as common sense or inevitable social 'norms' rather than as social constructs (cf. Gramsci, 1982), and thus structures of inequality and power are sustained and reproduced. In this way, the law is powerful not just because of the way its rules govern everyday life, but because of the way its constructions are normalized and become sedimented through the habitual routines of everyday life. Yet its role in shaping the allocation of privilege is largely obscured.

To-date, relatively little attention has been paid by social geographers (though see Blomley, 2011) to the taken-for-granted ways in which perceptions of, or assumptions about, the law may be submerged in mundane practices and routine ways of thinking and talking in public space, although it is an approach that is more developed within the field of socio-legal studies. Here, the concept of 'legal consciousness' is used to examine the place of law in everyday life. This emerged, primarily in the US, in the 1970s through studies of the extent of public knowledge about the law and its institutional structures (Sarat, 1977). Initially concerned with the law's effectiveness, this field of research subsequently evolved to focus on ordinary people's accounts of their everyday experiences as the basis for understanding the law in everyday life (Ewick & Silbey, 1998). In doing so, there was a theoretical shift away from an assumption that state law is the only form of law towards an acknowledgment that there are a variety of different legal or normative systems that people experience as regulatory or coercive; and a shift away from a presumed causal relationship between law and society towards recognition that the law and everyday life are not separate spheres but are mutually constituted (Harding, 2011; Nielsen, 2004). In this sense, legality has come to be understood not as limited to institutional structures of the law, but rather as an interpretative framework or set of resources with which, and through which, the social world is made. Merry (1990, p. 5) thus defines legal consciousness as 'the way people conceive of the 'natural' and normal way of doing things, their habitual patterns of talk and action and their common-sense understanding of the world'. This concept has resonance for studies of geographies of encounter because as Nielsen (2004) argues, personal understandings of the law can shape and define individuals' perceptions of social interactions.

Specifically, this paper focuses on common sense understandings of equality legislation in the UK. Using original empirical data about what ordinary people think about equality laws and how they work, it begins by examining how such popular imaginings become translated

into ideas about how people ought to talk or behave in different types of space. The paper then reflects on how these have effects by causing people to edit or alter their behaviours in public. In doing so, the paper contributes to social geographies by exposing how popular perceptions of equality legislation are formed; by exposing how these normative frameworks shape encounters through performances of civility; and by reflecting on the implications of this for social relations and the production of space in an age of diversity.

While this paper draws upon thinking about legal consciousness, it is debateable whether it can be described as a study of legal consciousness as defined in socio-legal studies. This is because legal consciousness research does not usually make the legal an explicit focus of interviews. Rather, direct questioning about the law is avoided in the belief that cultural narratives of legality are more readily exposed when people talk about other things (Ewick & Silbey, 1998). However, exceptions to this rule include Nielsen's (2004) highly regarded study of hate speech where she acknowledged that she asked direct questions about the law towards the latter part of her interviews.

Research design

The research upon which this paper is based was conducted as part of a European Research Council-funded study to explore how individuals understand and live processes of social differentiation. The UK element of this research reported in this paper was conducted in the city of Leeds because its proportion of minority ethnic residents is close to the national average (approximately 15%, 2011 Census); it has also witnessed a recent influx of migrants from other European countries and has a rapidly growing dual heritage population. Leeds is also characterized by religious diversity with well-established Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Hindu communities alongside plural Christian traditions; and it has an active LGBT community (Piekut et al., 2012).

The study involved in-depth multi-stage qualitative research predicated on 30 individual case studies ($n = 90$ interviews). Each case comprised a time-line, a life-story interview, a semi-structured interview about understandings of, and attitudes towards, 'difference' and an interview reflecting on the emerging findings of the study. This biographical approach was adopted to understand the complexity of individuals' identities, recognizing that people can simultaneously experience prejudice or discrimination while also actively holding negative attitudes towards others.

The first two interviews did not include any direct questioning about the law. However, because the participants' narratives made frequent reference to normative ideas about equality which they presumed to have a legal basis, and which they experienced as coercive, the final interview did ask direct questions about their understandings of equality legislation. Moreover, while the research considered the participants' perceptions of how the law is translated into everyday life, it did not also examine the effects that this then has on law – which is a key element of studies of legal consciousness.

The informants were recruited from amongst respondents to a survey about attitudes towards difference which was conducted as a Computer-Assisted Person Interview with 1522 people in their homes. Cluster analysis was used to identify 8 types of communities (all with varying degrees of social and ethnic diversity) where the survey was implemented (see Piekut et al., 2012). We applied a random location quota sampling design. This approach mixes a random selection of respondents with more purposeful sampling across different demographic profiles. The case study interviewees were chosen to reflect a range of social

backgrounds (in terms of socio-economic status, occupation, gender, ethnicity, religious/belief, sexual orientation and (dis)ability); whose personal circumstances and lifestyle affords them diverse opportunities for/experiences of encountering 'difference'; and to reflect the range of responses to the survey.

In drawing on data from these interviews, we recognise that participants cannot be understood through the lens of singular or fixed subject positions as majority/minority. Individuals can simultaneously experience prejudice or discrimination, for example, because they identify as gay or disabled while also benefitting from privileges as white or middle-class and holding negative attitudes towards, for example, minority ethnic groups or people in receipt of welfare benefits. We therefore provide descriptive labels of individuals' subject positions to indicate the complexity of their intersectional identities and highlight in the discussion when we perceive them to be speaking from positions of privilege or marginality. Specifically, we use the UK Office of National Statistics five-class system – National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC) – to define the participants' social class. NS-SEC 1 = Managerial and professional occupations; 2 = Intermediate occupations; 3 = Small employers and own account workers; 4 = Lower supervisory and technical occupations; 5 = Semi-routine and routine occupations; NWL-TU = Never worked and long-term unemployed; and NC = not classified which includes students, retired, homemakers, job inadequately described, and non-classifiable for other reasons. Of the 30 case study interviewees, half can be defined as 'middle-class' by occupation (NS-SEC 1, 2 and 3), or were not classified in the survey because they are retired/homemakers or students but can be categorized as 'middle-class' on the basis of other data (e.g. previous occupation/education). Two interviewees had never worked or were long-term unemployed. Just under half can be defined as 'working-class' by occupation (NS-SEC 4 and 5). In terms of ethnicity, most identified as white British, four as white other, four as black/black British and three as Asian/British Asian. Nearly half ($n = 14$) self-defined as Christian, three as Muslim and one as Jewish, the remainder stated they had no religion or refused to answer. Four of the interviewees self-identified as lesbian, gay or bisexual.

The interviews were transcribed, and coded. All the quotations included in this paper are verbatim. Three ellipsis dots are used to indicate minor edits have been made to clarify readability. All names are pseudonyms.

Legality, political correctness and the framing of encounters

The seminal definition of prejudice is credited to psychologist Allport (1954). He describes it as holding a negative attitude towards those recognized as members of a particular social group (regardless of whether the reading of identification is accurate). More popularly, it has been characterized as an 'unfounded hostility ... fear and dislike' of a group – even in the absence of contact – often predicated on stereotypes which can be used to justify discriminatory practice ...' (Runnymede Trust, 1997, p. 4). Since the 1960s, the emergence of the civil rights movements in North America and parallel struggles in European countries have led to the gradual (albeit uneven) development of equality legislation in most western societies in response to the recognition of patterns of prejudice and discrimination.

In the UK, specific legal protection developed in relation to race (1965, 1968, 1976), sex (1975) disability (1995), sexual orientation (2003), and religion and belief (2003) over five decades. In 2010, a new *Equality Act* (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>) came into force which brought together over 116 separate pieces of legislation into

one single legal framework. This legislation requires equality of opportunity such that both direct and indirect discrimination can be addressed in most aspects of public life in respect of the protected characteristics of: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation (Johnson & Vanderbeck, 2014).

When asked about their knowledge and understanding of the *Equality Act* (2010), most of those interviewed (from all backgrounds) admitted their ignorance of the specificity of the legislation. None of the interviewees had had cause to draw on this law themselves, nor had they witnessed it being evoked or enacted. A few did construct themselves as knowledgeable, claiming familiarity with the law, but their understandings were riddled with confusion. In critiquing the *Equality Act* (2010), Sean (below), for example, appears to muddle it with contemporary popular and policy discourses about the welfare state apparently eliding anxieties that minorities are being accorded too many rights with a current moral panic about 'skivers' who are perceived to be living off generous welfare payments at the expense of hard-working tax payers.

Interviewer: What do you know about the *Equality Act*?

Sean: I think its bullshit. I've got to be honest – for the decent people, it's there to protect, but there are just so many malingerers that are abusing the system. The system has got worse and, unless they tighten up on it, it's never going to get any better. (Male, 50–54, heterosexual, white British, NS-SEC 4)

Likewise, Paul's knowledge claims are undone by his common sense account in which he boldly asserts that the law is out of date, despite the interviewer having made clear it was only passed recently, before describing the legislation in terms of the ONS standard demographic categories which are used for the census and in equal opportunities monitoring forms.

Interviewer: ... are you familiar with the *Equality Act* that was passed a few years ago? ...

Paul: I think it's probably a bit outdated, to be honest ... It is a bit clichéd, isn't it? ... God, it's been going so many years. It's the same statement, and you fill in the same bits of the same form. White British, Afro-Caribbean, Muslim, and so on and so on ... Does it actually mean anything? ... I think it was all right at the time it came out, but I think it's getting a bit long in the tooth ... It must be 20 years, maybe longer and you think, so much has happened, is it time to give it a real, fresh approach? (Male, 60–64, heterosexual, white British, NS-SEC 1)

Several of the interviewees did perceive that equality legislation has achieved positive social change, even though they lacked understandings of the specifics. In particular, they drew attention to the ways in which they perceive it to have influenced routine ways of thinking and talking about difference for the better. In this way, they implicitly conceptualized the law as having the power to determine what is socially acceptable and therefore to normalize difference.

Thomas: It's very good because people should be forced to shut their mouths and not say anything stupid ... To me it means not saying anything which could be offensive and just taking into consideration every single minority group. (Male, 20–24, bisexual, white British, NS-SEC not classified because a student)

Terri: ... It just means people using the correct terminology for things ... There's certain words now that we used in the '50s that make you cringe. You think, did people really call people that? Spastic and things like that ... There's one word which is coloured ... my uncle, who's 70 something – I don't think my mum would still use it but my uncle used it the other day. I think in the '50s everybody said that ... and then they used to say, going to the Paki shop.

Interviewer: That was accepted as well?

Terri: We used to say it all the time and now we would never dream of saying it. (Female, 50–54, heterosexual, black British-Caribbean, NS-SEC 1)

Yet, these interviewees also recognized that their personal perceptions of the impact of equality legislation are out of alignment with the dominant perception circulated in popular and media discourses. As Chris explains:

Chris: I think that the law we have ... the incitement, the hatred act, the lot. I think that when you actually look at what they're really saying, how the courts have interpreted it, I think that it's a very good balance and really only prevents things that genuinely do step so far over the mark, that in exercising your freedom, you're threatening somebody else's quite seriously. But I think the way it's presented in the popular press and therefore the way in popular culture many people think about it, is different and gives an impression that I think is quite wrong. (Male, 55–60, bisexual, white British, NS-SEC 1)

Indeed, hostility towards equality legislation surfaced in most of the interviews. Here, the dominant understanding of the law was framed through the negative popular discourse of political correctness (PC). PC is a critique which emerged in both North America and the UK about the ways that equality legislation, and social movements which are pressing for further change, are perceived to be reshaping public civility. Namely, neoconservatives and right-wing commentators claim that a fear of the accusation of prejudice (and consequent legal action and/or social ostracism) is serving as a social constraint on self-expression and free speech in public life, and that support for cosmopolitan public norms is, as a consequence, greatly overestimated (Loury, 1994).

Interviewees speaking from positions of privilege criticized the ways that equality legislation – expressed as PC – is perceived to have redefined normativities about how people should talk and behave in routine encounters in public space, de-legitimizing certain language, practices and uses of space. In doing so, their observations expose the way perceptions of the law – and the ideologies of equality it is understood to legitimate – have become sedimented into everyday life and embodied in certain social and cultural expectations and practices. Even though it is not always possible to trace back the relationship between these normativities and the actual law and no legal procedures or force has necessarily been explicitly invoked. In other words, their legal consciousness exceeds the reality of the implementation of the law. In such ways, popular understandings of the law tacitly mediate or influence the production of space and frame the encounters which take place within it.

Craig: There are a lot of things that you can't say and do in everyday life that you used to be able to ... Like during Ramadan. Eating. Is it politically correct for me to eat my lunch during Ramadan when a Muslim's fasting and sat next to me? ... It's all about boundaries ... the workplace – is a very taboo area. How you speak to people. How people perceive – because the thing with it is what might not seem offensive to me and Ahmed [he had referred earlier to having racialised banter with this Muslim colleague], if somebody else overheard it, regardless of whether they're Muslim, they might find it offensive ... because it's not what they want to hear. (Male, 30–34, heterosexual, white British, NS-SEC 4)

Andrea: To a young child, the word gay means happy – it's not referred to as in someone's sexuality. But my daughter's come home and they're not allowed to use it at school. They're allowed to say certain words at school and gay is one of them we're not allowed to say. Why? Political correctness ... Well if you're going to tell them they can't use the word gay, please explain to them why they can't use it ... I find it – it's like you're been dictated to and controlled in what you can say and what you think. (Female, 40–44, heterosexual, white British, NS-SEC 5)

As the latter quotation hints (*you're been dictated to and controlled in what you can say and what you think*), there is a common perception that space is being regulated in ways which rub up against some interviewees' perceptions of what they conceive as 'normal' or common sense ways of doing and being. As a consequence, they describe being forced to change their habituated behaviour because of a fear of legal or regulatory sanctions (e.g. anti-discrimination laws, grievance procedures and disciplinary tribunals) rather than because they believe it is morally appropriate to do so. Indeed, Brown (2006) has argued that tolerance is merely a discourse and practice of governmentality to manage difference (see also Fuerdi's, 2011 argument that a truly tolerant society needs to cultivate individual moral autonomy rather than enforcing tolerance of diversity). In this sense, civilities shared during everyday encounters with 'difference' can only be taken as evidence of the participants' recognition of how they 'ought' to relate to others in public, and their compliance with these social expectations, rather than their belief in, or acceptance of the law and the ideologies of equality it legitimates.

These concerns were most commonly expressed in relation to the workplace which, as an institutional space, is perceived to be a tightly regulated environment where breaches of equality legislation are likely to be effectively enforced – albeit, this perception probably overstates the reality. In a study of university diversity policies, Ahmed (2012) found most were a paper exercise; a substitute for action. She characterized them as 'non-performative', in that they did not bring into effect what they described. However, given the financial and social consequences of unemployment, the workplace was frequently identified as the space where white male heterosexual interviewees experience a sense of vulnerability to the perceived disciplinary power of the law and are wary about how they negotiate encounters with those different from themselves. Yet as most had never witnessed the implementation of equality legislation or diversity policies (though see Paul) in many cases, they are acting in a Foucauldian (1977) sense as their own 'overseers': exercising surveillance over and against themselves. At the same time, their comments also implicitly underestimate the significance and impact of prejudice and discrimination on its recipients, reflecting the taken for granted privileges of whiteness, heterosexuality and masculinity.

Michael: If another driver that's not English at work, say Polish, Pakistani, dark, whatever you want to call them. If they make a complaint about me the company will investigate ... we've got notices up saying that calling names or slang or stuff like is a disciplinary offence. So if you get caught saying 'that bloody Paki over there has run me off the road today', if anybody hears you they can report you for it. It's a sackable offence. (Male 55–59, heterosexual, white British, NS-SEC 5)

Paul: God, it's unbelievable. I've always been a man manager. I've always been a people manager, you should say now. Can't say man manager, you've got to say people manager. I've learnt throughout the years that I must listen to what these people are saying. I never jump in, I never over-shout them, I never over-talk them, I never bully them. I'll sit down with them ... I've known situations where you're having a banter situation and sexual comments have been made, and somebody's taken a really bad reception and taken a grievance out. I thought, hang on a minute, we weren't being personal about you, we were just having a bit of a banter and a bit of a laugh, and you've taken it the wrong way. But they've taken a full grievance out, and then that has a knock-on effect ... You've got watch your Ps and Qs, you need to be very careful what you say, which is a poor state to be in, when you can't express yourself in fear of saying the wrong word or making a wrong statement which could put you in deep trouble. We're supposed to be a nation of free speech, but sometimes you wonder, don't you? (Male, 60–64, heterosexual, white British, NS-SEC 1)

Nielsen (2004) argues that in the US, the law, by protecting free speech in public places as the basis of democracy, enables hate speech to go unregulated which reinforces hierarchies of power by enabling women and people of colour to be harassed with impunity. Here, some interviewees argued that law is being deployed against 'majority' populations eroding their free speech, and that as a consequence the distribution of rights and the balance of power in the public sphere is being affected. Notably, white male heterosexual interviewees perceive progressive movements to have hijacked the law so that it now institutionalizes different interests, ideologically legitimating the rights of minorities and destabilizing the traditional hierarchies of power from which they have benefitted historically and consequently their habituated sense of privilege.

Joseph: So I think it's [the law] very biased towards minorities. I'm not allowed to say anything about them; they can say it about me though. They can stand up on soap boxes and say we are vermin. But I can't call them vermin. (Male, 65–69, heterosexual, white British NC – not classified because retired)

Andrew: The problem is there's too many scared white people. So I don't think it's just legislation, I think it's the people administering it. So I think we've gone from being quite a xenophobic, racist society to being – to going the other way. There's middle class white people who are scared to appear racist or discriminatory in any way ... minorities are very aware of that – will use it to their advantage ... I don't know what you can do about that – apart from use commonsense. (Male, 30–34, heterosexual, white British, NS-SEC 1)

At a time when austerity, unprecedented levels of mobility and population change are producing economic, social and political uncertainty, feelings of insecurity have become ordinary even among the white middle-class who experience material security and privilege (Gilroy, 2004; Waite et al., 2014). This perceived increasing impotence of whiteness (Gilroy, 2004; Nayak, 1999; Rogaly & Taylor, 2011) is evident in the claims of interviewees that the law favours minority ethnic groups over the white population. Implicit in these emotional accounts is a perception that the legal entitlements of minority ethnic groups empower them to make accusations of prejudice against white people in public space which might lead to their general moral character being questioned when no offense or harm was intended. Indeed, these comments expose the white male heterosexual interviewees' lack of understanding of equality legislation and what constitutes discrimination; the way everyday interpretations of the law are perceived to produce identity abrasions; as well as the participants' metaphorical belief that minority ethnic groups and women no longer know their place. Moreover, these observations contain many parallels with popular debates about multi-culturalism in which right-wing commentators have criticised migrant communities for emphasizing their 'differences', rather than being prepared to assimilate into the white majority community (Nayak, 1999; Phillips, 2006). Instead, criticisms of how the law is perceived to be changing encounters with difference in public space are mobilized as a justification for interviewees' prejudices. Although, as previous research has found, when a prejudice is justified, it is not usually recognized as such, but rather is considered to be a well-founded point of view (Valentine, 2010).

Sean: ... minority groups ... The thing is I don't see where they've made any changes. I can see loads of what we've done and how we've accommodated [them] ... we're always judged for it. We're always prejudiced. Because you're white, you're prejudiced – well, if you're black, you're laughing your head off because, if anybody calls you black, well, you've got them straight away on a charge ... Equality law ... doesn't protect that, does it? It doesn't protect white people as much as it does them, so ... that's what it creates prejudice.

Interviewer: ... you think that creates a prejudice in a way?

Sean: Yeah, it does because you should protect everybody. If you're going to tar somebody with a brush and you want everybody to be the same, well, then let's have a bit of equality then. (Male, 50–54, heterosexual, white British, NS-SEC 4)

In sum, in this section, we have examined popular ideas about the nature of equality legislation which are held by people in everyday life; and the ways in which they, as ordinary citizens, experience and understand this to shape the public sphere. The evidence of this section is that popular imaginings of the law, pejoratively dubbed PC, have become translated into normativities about how people ought to talk, or ought to behave in different types of space. Influenced by Goffman's work on social norms in public life¹ (1971), we understand PC to be perceived to impinge on individuals in two ways. First, through *obligation*: in terms of how individuals understand themselves to be expected to relate to others. Second, through *expectation*: that something might be done to them should they not comply with the law as they interpret it: for example, they may be prosecuted and/or morally judged.

Previous research has suggested that the law plays a powerful role in legitimating particular ideologies in ways which are largely unseen because its constructions are normalized and sedimented into everyday life and so are obscured under the guise of being inevitable or common sense (cf. Gramsci, 1982). Yet popular legal consciousness about equality legislation exposes this lost structure to those with a habituated sense of privilege (particularly white heterosexual men) because it subverts the traditional hierarchies of power from which they have benefitted and challenges their common sense understanding of the world. However, while equality legislation may be changing people's perceptions of appropriate behaviour and speech in the public sphere, the evidence of this research is that this reflects recognition of how they ought to relate to others in everyday encounters, and their compliance with these social expectations, rather than a belief in, or acceptance of, such normativities. Indeed, the disquiet expressed about equality legislation by white male interviewees in particular evidences the observation of critical race scholars' in the US that free speech, while appearing to be a liberal legal concept which operates in a neutral way, actually favours the powerful and serves to reproduce existing social hierarchies (Nielsen, 2004). In the next section of the paper, we consider the implications of this for how people negotiate and use space.

The spatial sensitivities of encounter: 'feeling out'

The popular understanding of equality legislation is that it circumscribes what can be said in the public sphere. The place where interviewees claimed that they feel most freely able to express their attitudes towards social difference is the quasi-private space of their own or others' homes, amongst known and trusted people such as friends and family members where they do not have to negotiate encounters with difference. In other words, in spaces with those who can be presumed to hold the same attitudes, or who would not be judgemental should anyone express views which do not accord with what are perceived as dominant social norms. Spaces which are also presumed to be free of the networks of discipline and surveillance (cf. Foucault, 1977) which characterize other spaces like the workplace.

Rachel: With your immediate family and your immediate circle of friends, you can say what you want without fear of upsetting somebody or saying the wrong thing or saying something that somebody might take as wrong. You might say things that you don't necessarily mean but if you're just letting off steam. Whereas in a different, in a lecture room at Uni you might not be so

forward in saying something that you'd say to your immediate friends because of the nature of the people that are around you. I suppose when you're with your closest friends you've probably got or might have the same views on the majority of things. Whereas when you're in a group you don't know everybody and there are people from different races and different backgrounds, you would be guarded in what you say. (Female, 35–40, heterosexual, white British, NS-SEC 5)

Craig: ... talking about things such as that (his views on equality) out in public, if you said it in the wrong light, it would be misconstrued ... so I think you've got to be careful in what you say. What environment you're in, who's about ... Within my own home's, probably the only place, or a couple of friend's homes, but nowhere else. (Male, 30–34, heterosexual, white British, NS-SEC 4)

In making this argument, the interviewees implicitly represent a reversal of traditional understandings of the 'proper place' for the expression of 'difference'. Cooper (2004) has shown how historically, the law has defined the 'proper place' for particular social groups. While the public sphere has traditionally been the domain of white, heterosexual men, minorities (e.g. lesbians and gay men, disabled people, etc.) have been tolerated only provided they confine the expression of their identities to the private rather than the public sphere. The civil rights movement, feminism and AIDS activism of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century have gradually troubled and contested these spatial divisions. While the development of equality legislation has secured the rights of these groups in the public sphere, some of the interviewees argued that it has been at the expense of free speech in public life. Legal change has not altered their personal views about social differences ('how you feel is how you feel. You can't just change'; 'I don't like it'). Rather, they claim that the views of the so-called 'majority' are now being pushed out of the public domain such that they have to separate out their attitudes towards 'difference' – which can only be openly expressed in quasi-private spaces which are less commonly subject to formal or informal regulation – from their conduct in the public sphere which they perceive must align with PC social normativities described in the previous section. A similar pattern was evident in Richardson and Munro's (2013) study of work on sexual equality in UK Local Authorities where they observed that some workers responsible for the implementation of sexualities equality work carried out this duty publicly whilst acknowledging that they maintained different views and values in private.

Sylvia: I think privately, you're with your friends, family even, whatever, you can talk freely and say what you think. Then you go outside and you don't get into those conversations because how you feel is how you feel. You can't just change and the person can't just change. (Female, 65–69, heterosexual, white British, NC not classified because retired)

Sean: Sometimes I have to bite my bottom lip and be politically correct for the sake of it, but sometimes I don't like it ... *it depends on the situation, where you are, doesn't it* [emphasis added]? If you're in a multicultural society, like now, I'm working in a coloured person's house, so, before I open my mouth, I have to think all the time about what I'm saying. I mustn't say anything that might offend them or anything like that. *I'm conscious all the time about it every day now.*

Interviewer: ... Where do you feel freest to say what you think?

Sean: At home, with Jane [his wife]. (Male, 50–54, heterosexual, white British, NS-SEC 4)

As these quotes illustrate, interviewees claimed that where you are shapes what you can say, arguing that in everyday encounters beyond the home, they only feel able to speak freely if they can locate people like themselves whom they can trust. In this way, it is sometimes possible to carve out personal space in institutional and public environments where individuals

can relax and share views which they know might be construed as prejudice. Below, Ineta and Sameeha talk about their contrasting experiences of their respective work places.

Ineta: [Referring to her critical views of Islam] I tend to internalise it or discuss it with my husband. There aren't many people who can talk about that sort of thing. At work I've got a few close friends who we can have a laugh and a joke about that sort of thing. But that's it. I can't go out and discuss it with lots of people. I would be marginalised. (Female, 50–54, heterosexual, White other migrant, NS-SEC 1)

Sameeha: ... while I am at work I know I cannot say what I am thinking. Because of that equality and diversity legislation, so I know I will be fired if I say something ...

Interviewer: Can I just ask you for an example of something you might want to say, but you wouldn't?

For example, if transsexual people work in my team, even if I don't feel good about him or her, I cannot say so, because it will be discrimination ... I cannot say so I'll have to keep quiet what I think about that person. But, yeah, if I am within my group of friends from my community, maybe I can say about that person easily ... I can say whatever I think freely. (Female, 30–34, heterosexual, Asian British, NS-SEC 1)

Identifying like-minded people in everyday encounters with casual acquaintances and strangers involves careful attention to the socio-spatial context. In an analysis of the complexities of communication in public life through observational research, Goffman (1959) argues that it is in effect an interactive game played between two parties. The sender expresses him/herself and the receiver reacts to this message. The sender has views that are not knowable by the receiver, but if known may alter the receiver's interpretation of what is said. The sender may want to indicate his/her position but can indirectly convey an unintended standpoint; or he/she may intentionally want to disguise the views he/she holds. Knowing these possibilities, the receiver searches the body language and gestures of the sender for clues to his/her position. In this sense, Goffman (1959) considers every act of communication a small performance in which participants 'feel each other out' to identify if they share similar attitudes and values.

Although our research draws on interviewees' accounts of reported interactions rather than 'naturalistic' observation of their social worlds, nonetheless their descriptions have some resonance with Goffman's theories of public behaviour. In the context of this paper, 'feeling out' conversations might include the tentative display of moral values through the use of emblematic speech (e.g. queer, differently-abled) which someone holding different social attitudes would not use. At the same time, the meaning of what is said can also be contingent on the embodied identities of the participants, and the spatial context in which they encounter each other. For example, the word nigger can have a completely different meaning if spoken by a black person or a white person; or men in an all-male group might talk about women differently when they are together at the gym than when they are in mixed company. The price for getting it wrong can be formal or legal sanction (as Paul described in the previous section, when he recalled a female colleague taking out a formal grievance against a male colleague because she considered what he thought of as normal office banter to be sexism) or embarrassment and even social ostracism. Below Andrew describes how his apparently racist banter with a friend is understood by them both to be a joke rather than representative of their literal views, and as such he implies it is actually evidence of his cosmopolitanism rather than the prejudice it would be if said in another socio-spatial context. In contrast, Andrea

describes how apparently liberal people she has encountered in her local community have tried to 'feel out' whether it is safe to share their prejudices with her.

Andrew: I've got some Sri Lankan friends ... when we are out together they say things like, 'Kiss my brown arse', and all those sort of stupid things. I say stuff like, 'Come on you immigrants' – not immigrants – what is it I say? 'Colonial – you colonial lot' ... Or whatever – a bit of banter like that. It's – I don't worry about that at all because it's taken as it's meant and we're really good mates. (Male, 30–34, heterosexual, white British, NS-SEC 1)

Andrea: ... when we had the shop, because you get to know people that come in and out and you're having conversations. A lot of them, I come across middle class, butter wouldn't melt in their mouths, really educated. Then you'd have a conversation and they'd just come out with something that's just, it's not obvious what they've said, but it's inappropriate. Do you understand what I mean?

Interviewer: Yeah, it's a kind of leaking at the edges.

Yeah: You'll have a conversation with them and ... they will give you an opinion on something, say on immigration ... but they give you an opinion they think that you want them to hear. But there's like an undertone, you can hear the undertone in the voice and in certain things that they say, that it's like [they mean], no I don't really agree with this. No, they're coming here and stealing all our jobs. (Female, 40–44, heterosexual, white British, NS-SEC 5)

As the quotation from Andrea implies, although popular understandings of equality are predicated on a sense of obligation and expectation of respect for 'difference', nonetheless encounters in public environments are not necessarily free from prejudice. Rather, individuals find ways of discretely subverting what they understand to be social normativities about how they ought to talk, or ought to behave in different types of space and avoiding disciplinary networks of surveillance. Below, Joseph describes how he discretely expresses his Islamophobia by obstructing or verbally abusing Muslim women he encounters in the street while being careful not to be seen or overheard for fear of formal sanction. In doing so, he implies that he scans his environment taking into account whether a space is regulated before acting on his feelings.

Joseph: I think it's all wrong. Far too much politically correct things. Way over the top human rights and all this business. It's all silly. Yeah, well you've got to be careful what you say. I mean I can't go and call somebody a – well I do occasionally say 'Have you got a bomb under there?' But you've got to be careful how you say it ... You daren't say it in public. You daren't, because you don't know who you're talking to basically. I mean occasionally I will ... You see, if someone's [a Muslim woman] walking towards me I won't move. [I say] 'Get out of the way' and some unpleasant word, followed by 'I didn't see her, she's black, they're all in black. Wear something white or smile' ... But you've got to be very careful. (Male, 65–69, heterosexual, white British NC – not classified because retired)

The discrete nature of contemporary prejudice in everyday encounters is further evidenced by Terri. She argues that equality legislation has not brought an end to racism (nor we argue to other forms of prejudice and intolerance). In contrast, to some of the interviewees cited in the previous section who perceive the law to have the power to determine what is socially acceptable and to act as a disciplinary force, Terri understands the law to be more impotent. She too sees the law as a claim to power but argues that it has been unable to create social change and normalize 'difference'. In other words, its ideology of equality has not been successfully inscribed on the lived environment as 'common sense norm', but rather it is regarded as an imposed social construct. Instead, she suggests that those who hold prejudices resist the disciplinary power of the law by employing covert or subtle tactics. In

this way, prejudice operates at a less audible register which makes it more difficult to name and challenge.

Terri: The racism that I was describing in the early '70s and '80s which was overt, has now become subtle and covert and much more clever. So when I'm at work, I feel it loud and clear. It hasn't gone away, but it's much more undercover, much more clever, much more difficult to prove ... people know they can't say certain things but they do it by undermining you, not giving you the same opportunity, making you subtly feel lower. It's much more subtle and I've got so many friends, black friends, who have suffered racism. Loads. Unhappy, feel undermined. It's just like a struggle. You say, well we know that it's there but we can't prove it and you just have to live with it. (Female, 50–54, heterosexual, black British-Caribbean, NS-SEC 1)

As such, the evidence of this research is the development of equality legislation has produced an expectation that the UK has a progressive public culture. Yet, prejudice, rather than disappearing from everyday encounters as a consequence of the obligation and expectation to comply with this legal framework, is changing its form. Blatant public expressions of intolerance are becoming less commonplace, but discrete forms of prejudice persist under a façade of tolerance. Indeed, Brown (2006) has argued that tolerance is merely a discourse to manage difference while not destabilizing hegemonic norms. As the examples used in this section demonstrate, individuals are sensitive to the spatialities of their encounters with 'others': concealing or performing their prejudices according to their readings of the regulation of the spaces (i.e. where does power reside) in which these occur. This is problematic for both those whom the legislation seeks to protect, and those who are critical of the social normativities it affords. For those the law was introduced to protect, the covert nature of contemporary prejudice makes it more difficult to expose and challenge, producing a frustration that offenders are 'getting away with it', and making it harder to identify patterns of prejudice in form and intent and challenge structures of power (e.g. racist, patriarchal and heteronormative ideologies)

For those who are critical of the progressive social normativities equality legislation is perceived to have produced, there is a sense of anger and frustration that their views are being silenced by the law. They consider themselves to suffer hidden injuries as a consequence of what they perceive as a public loss of voice which shapes what remedies they understand to be possible. Indeed, this observation may offer a new angle through which to understand the recent rise of traditionalist anti-immigration parties such as UK Independence Party (UKIP). In positioning itself against the 'PC' of the Westminster establishment and the European Union in particular, UKIP offers a vehicle through which entrenched prejudices can find a kind of legitimisation in the public domain. It is a perception of 'victimhood' which needs to be contested because it risks displacing attention and energy away from fundamental inequalities.

Andrea: In a way it's [equality legislation] good because it protects people, but in another it just buries the issues. They say there's no discrimination in this country and I don't believe that for a second. I think that's the biggest pile of rubbish I've ever heard. There is from all – and I don't just mean, whites, blacks, Muslims. I think it's across every spectrum. It's not just a matter of white, British people as they put it, has this issue with colours [sic] and Muslims or other religions I think it's right across the board. They have issues with everybody. Muslims, to some degree have issues with white British people and vice a versa. I think all it's [equality legislation] doing is burying it to a degree ... [Edit] I think people going to get to the point where this is, no, we're not having this. You can't dictate to me what I can think. I mean I agree they have to draw the line somewhere and they've got have boundaries. But all it does is shoves it underground and leaves it fester ... At some point, it's going to raise its head. (Female, 40–44, heterosexual, white British, NS-SEC 5)

Framing encounters: equality, legality and power

Sean: Well, it's just a way of avoiding, like all MPs avoid a direct question. They dance around it and political correctness is the same. It's just *dancing round the situation and not really dealing with it*.

This paper offers new insights into geographical debates about encounters by interrogating people's accounts of the way they respond to others in everyday interactions. Specifically, it has examined the way that routine encounters with difference are framed by normative expectations about how people should talk and behave in institutional and public environments which are grounded in popular perceptions of the law (legal consciousness) and its assumed consequences, albeit these perceptions do not necessarily have any actual legal basis.

It has exposed how the law plays a critical though generally invisible role in legitimating particular ideologies through the way its constructions are sedimented into everyday life and come to be regarded as common sense norms (cf. Gramsci, 1982). Specifically, it has shown how popular legal consciousness about equality legislation disrupts the common sense understanding of the world held by those with a habituated sense of privilege because it challenges the traditional hierarchies of power from which they profit.

Participants in this study speaking from positions of privilege (some whiteness and/or masculinity, others heterosexuality or Christianity as the dominant religion) argued that equality legislation in the UK has the power to determine what is socially acceptable and acts as a disciplinary force. As a result, individuals claimed that they are editing how they relate to others out of an obligation to comply with these social norms and because of an expectation that they might be prosecuted and/or morally judged if they fail to do so, rather than because they necessarily believe in, or accept, such normativities. As such, everyday encounters with difference can only be read as evidence that expectations of equality have become embedded into routine ways of talking and interacting in public life, rather than as proof of a progressive public culture.

Moreover, the evidence of this research is that popular understandings of equality legislation are changing where and how prejudices can be expressed. Namely, those who hold negative attitudes towards 'difference' perceive they are only free to express their views in spaces amongst trusted friends and family members where they feel out of the reach of the power of the law. Connections with strangers and acquaintances who might share such views have to be 'felt out' through careful attention to the embodied identities, and spatial contexts of such encounters, and by the sensitive use of emblematic speech. As such, participants speaking from positions of privilege perceive equality legislation to be powerful and to have produced behavioural change in institutional and public environments which they understand to favour marginal groups and to be silencing free speech – albeit without recognizing that abilities to speak and to be heard are differentially available (Nielsen, 2004). It is a claim to victimhood which needs to be challenged.

Yet, participants whose identities might be characterized as privileged or marginalized both described how prejudice is nonetheless still respectively expressed, or experienced in encounters with strangers. Accounts from both the doers and recipients of such acts describe how if prejudice is subtle or covert it can elude formal or informal regulation. As a consequence, the way power operates through the mutual constitution of the socio-legal and the socio-spatial to generate exclusions is less readily visible or challenged. In this sense, those

who experience prejudice in encounters still consider the law to be relatively impotent when it comes to protecting individuals, in contrast to those speaking from positions of privilege (as white, male, heterosexual, etc.) who understand the law to be an effective disciplinary power in shaping their social interactions (while also failing to recognize the significance of the discrimination and inequalities which pre-existed legal regulation).

This suggests that equality legislation alone will not be sufficient to change attitudes and beliefs and achieve a truly progressive society. Instead, there is a danger that those with a habituated sense of privilege may mobilize a backlash against equality legislation on the grounds it provides a powerful normative justification for silencing free speech (cf. US see Nielsen, 2004). This needs to be contested. In particular, there is a need for a wider social debate to reflect on what constitutes prejudice, to draw out and challenge covert intolerance, and to tackle why those in privileged positions feel alienated by equality (or PC). Without addressing these affective dimensions of the law, in the words of Sean (above), we will just be ‘dancing around the situation’.

Note

1. We recognize Goffman was referring only to social norms, not legal norms but nonetheless find his observations helpful.

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